



January
2022
Issue



GOODBYE 2021



**WELCOME
2022**

I would like to wish you all a VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR.

We have all, one way or another, got through what turned out to be a very challenging 2021. Welcome to 2022 whatever it may bring.

Mid Norfolk Mencap, along with the whole world is still meeting the challenges of life within a pandemic and we are doing our absolute best for our clients, staff, families, volunteers and friends. I am sure there is much you would all like us to do and any perceived shortcomings I apologise for, however, I can assure you that we are all doing the best we can.

We have a fantastic group of staff and Trustees who have been challenged beyond anything previously experienced and I thank them all for their continued hard work and dedication.

As you all know the cuts to social care make life very difficult for us all, especially in the learning disability world. To make things even more challenging, there is great difficulty finding care staff, people just do not want to do this type of work and although it is not the highest paid, it is a very skilled, worthwhile and rewarding career as pointed out by the recent BBC programme featuring Ed Balls who, although talking about older people's social care, did address some of the issues we face. I have been in contact with Mencap Societies across the country and they are all finding the same issues, it is not just in Norfolk.

On a more positive note, I want to echo Jon Rose in his Christmas message and say thank you to Jon and Ruth Gooch and all who helped at the BBQ in the summer. It was a great day and good to meet up with those who were able to come.

I sincerely hope that although we could not have the clubs, groups and discos last year, we will be able to meet up some time soon in 2022. We need to consider the safety and health of all, plus the need to adhere to Government guidelines, before we can make such decisions. I can assure you, we will be letting you know when these can open again.

Take care and keep safe.

Pat Grout,
Chairperson





JOINT BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AT MERLE BODDY HOUSE



It's not often that we have two big birthdays together to celebrate at the house, but last month, Leslie and Tracy did just that!

Leslie turned 60 on 27th November and Tracy was 50 on 20th December. A special party was arranged that was a surprise until just a week before!



For the party to happen, it was organised like a military operation with all guests only attending with a negative lateral flow test and having temperatures taken on the door. In total, 30 guests came from far and wide, the furthest Canada!

The venue was the scout hut in Toftwood and a fantastic evening was had by all.



CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

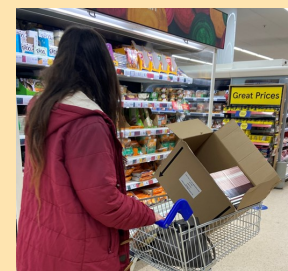


Merle Boddy House had a real Christmas tree donated by Algy's Farm Shop, Dereham ready for the residents to decorate themselves.

Another big thank you goes to Algy's for their kindness after their recent pumpkin donation.



We would also like to thank Tesco in Dereham for donating advent calendars for our all Community service users. Leonie had fun collecting them from the store to bring back to the office for everyone.



The residents of the house won a Christmas card competition run by the Dereham Community Hub of Independence Matters. It was open to service users at all their hubs and they won £50 for their creative entry (held proudly by Paul opposite). The presentation by one of their Trustees was unfortunately cancelled due to Covid but many congratulations to our guys for winning.



GETTING INTO THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT



Craig & Callum making a wreath decoration

Leonie decorating a gingerbread house



Kevin & Michael visiting Norwich



Kevin & Pam enjoying a meal out in Norwich



John's first Christmas tree at home, kindly donated by a staff member

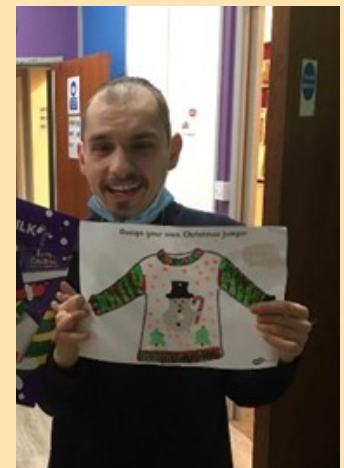


CHRISTMAS JUMPER DESIGN COMPETITION



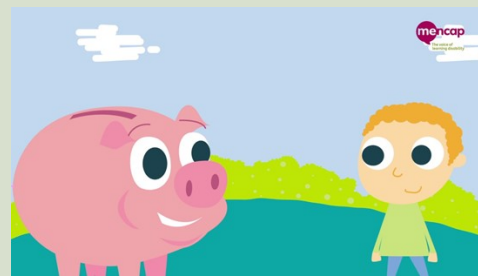
Mel organised a competition for the Community Outreach Service users for a Christmas jumper design. Jade (on the left) was the overall winner, with Bogdan (below) and Kevin as runners up.

Chocolate selection boxes for all three!



MENCAP WILLS & TRUST SERVICE

Did you know that if someone with a learning disability has an inheritance left directly to them, it could lead to the loss of their means-tested benefits and support packages? There are lots of special things to consider when families leave money to someone with a learning disability in their Will.



National Royal Mencap Society have asked us to help them spread the word about their “Planning for the Future” seminars. The seminars offer families:

- Support and information from Mencap’s Wills & Trusts Service.
- The opportunity to hear from a solicitor who specialises in this complex area of law.
- The chance to share experiences with other families who are in a similar situation.

Seminars take place online throughout 2022 (and some face-to-face dates are available in select cities). There are online dates from February though to December 2022, usually two each month.



Anyone interested can book a place online by visiting:
www.mencap.org.uk/willsandtrusts/events

or call: Leanne Quirke on 0207 696 6925
or email: willsandtrusts@mencap.org.uk

DOWN SYNDROME BILL



A Bill focused on improving the lives of those living with Down syndrome passed its second reading in Parliament on Friday 26th November after receiving backing from the government. It will now be considered by a committee of MPs and, if approved by both the Houses of Commons and Lords, could become law by Spring 2022.

Conservative MP Dr Liam Fox introduced the Down Syndrome Bill with the support of cross-party MPs, as campaigners called on Parliament to pass the bill before World Down Syndrome Day on 21st March 2022.

If passed into law, the Down Syndrome Act would improve provisions for those living with Down syndrome in England, placing a duty on local authorities to assess individuals’ needs for maternity care, education, health and social care, and employment. It will be the first of its kind in the world.

MP Liam Fox said his bill was needed now because people with Down syndrome are starting to outlive their parents. He said it would "lighten the burden" on parents who worried about what would happen to their children after they died.

The National Down Syndrome Policy Group (NDSPG) has launched a campaign in support for the Bill. The ‘Stand Up for Down Syndrome’ campaign includes a Change.org petition which has attracted the signatures of 30,400 people with Down syndrome, their families and supporters.

Welcome to our Team!

We have recently recruited two new Support Workers: **Gavin Tampin** to work at Merle Boddy House and **Lauren Ferne** in our Outreach Community Services Team.



Gavin joins after 17 years as a Police Community Support Officer and then 4 years as a Teaching Assistant, while Lauren joins the team after working in various establishments as a Care Assistant and then, after moving to Norfolk in 2017, working for Breckland Care.



We welcome them both and are sure that their skills and knowledge will be of great value to our residents and clients.

VOTE FOR US



Community Grants

We are delighted that our **Field to Fork Allotment Project** has been chosen by the Tesco Community Grants initiative for customer votes in the Dereham Tesco store.

For 3 months, from the first week of January 2022 through to 31st March 2022, we are one of the groups that customers in Dereham's Tesco Extra can cast their vote for using a token given to them at the checkout each time they shop.

Tesco works with community charity Groundworks to run its community funding scheme, which sees grants of up to £1,500, £1,000 and £500 awarded to local community projects.



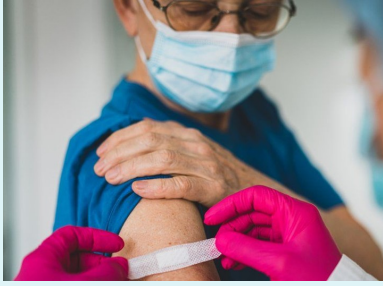
Three groups in every community have been shortlisted to receive the cash awards and shoppers are then invited to vote for who they think should take away the top grant.

We are hoping to get the top grant to really make a difference and support people with learning difficulties to enhance their skills, promote their wellbeing and enjoy the great outdoors by growing and looking after their own produce.



Please spread the word to your friends and family for them to support us as it would be great to get the highest grant amount for our exciting allotment project.





BOOSTER VACCINATIONS

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) had previously advised that those aged over 40 years and those at higher risk from Covid-19 should be offered a booster.

The discovery of the Omicron variant once again requires an extraordinary response from the NHS and the Prime Minister announced on 12th December the new vaccination challenge which will see the NHS deliver more vaccines in the run up to Christmas than ever before. UK chief medical officers increased their assessment of the Covid-19 threat level to 4. However, even with the additional protection that vaccine boosters will give, the threat from Omicron remains serious. Advice from SAGE is that the number of people requiring specialist hospital and community care could be significant.

From Monday 13th December, people aged 30 and over in England are invited to book their Covid boosters amid these concerns. All eligible adults can book their booster job two months (61 days) after their second dose using the NHS national booking system, in order to get their top-up three months (91 days) on from their second dose. The Plan B measures will be reviewed on 5th January, before their expiry date of 26th January.

In addition, a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine (30 microgram) for young people aged 12 to 15 years is advised no sooner than 12 weeks after the first dose. The overall intention of the measures advised above is to accelerate the deployment of Covid-19 vaccines and raise levels of protection across the population. **If you are eligible for a booster, please take up the offer and keep yourself protected as we head into winter.**

Both the Moderna (50 microgram) and Pfizer-BioNTech (30 microgram) vaccines have been shown to substantially increase antibody levels when offered as a booster dose and should be used with equal preference in the Covid-19 booster programme. Continued efforts will be made to offer Covid-19 vaccination (first, second and booster doses) to adults who have yet to receive any Covid-19 vaccinations. JCVI will continue to review the programme and consider further evidence to ensure that health benefits are maximised alongside the rapidly evolving data on the Omicron variant.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND THE PEOPLE YOU CARE FOR

This autumn/winter, the NHS is preparing for a bad flu season alongside rising cases of Covid-19, which is why taking up any offer of flu or Covid-19 booster vaccines is so important. Vaccines are the best protection for you and for those you care for from these deadly viruses – please get yours booked today. Flu vaccination is important because:

- more people are likely to get flu this winter as fewer people will have built up natural immunity to it during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- if you get flu and Covid-19 at the same time, research shows you're more likely to be seriously ill.
- getting vaccinated against flu and Covid-19 will provide protection for you and those around you for both these serious illnesses.

If you've had Covid-19, it's safe to have the flu vaccine. It will still be effective at helping to prevent flu. The flu vaccine is given free on the NHS to people who:

- are 50 and over (including those who'll be 50 by 31 March 2022)
- have certain health conditions
- are pregnant
- are in long-stay residential care
- receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick
- live with someone who is more likely to get infections (such as someone who has HIV, has had a transplant or is having certain treatments for cancer, lupus or rheumatoid arthritis)
- frontline health or social care workers



SPECIAL CELEBRATION DAYS IN JANUARY 2022



6th, National Shortbread Day

17th, Blue Monday (The most depressing day of the year!)

20th, National Cheese Lovers Day



25th, Burns Night is celebrated in Scotland celebrating the birthday of Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns (1759 to 1796). His best known work is Auld Lang Syne.

25th, St. Dwynwen's Day



First catch your Haggis!



Through the heather, through the glen.
Go the Highland hunting men.

Wrapped warm in kilts 'gainst winter cold
Only the bravest, and the bold.

For who knows where the Haggis hides
Amidst these frozen mountain sides?

In the loch with neep and tatties?
Or lurking with the sheep and ratties?

They seek him here, they seek him there
But none can find the Haggis' lair.

This 'chieftain of the pudding race'
Is lying low without a trace.

Only the piper and 'Selkirk Grace'
Can summon Haggis to this place.



But then with toasts, all passed around.
We see the Haggis, firm and round.

The humble Haggis, cooked and dressed
Is here to feed men truly blessed.

So let this gathering on Burns Day.
Eat and drink and laugh and play.

Then, for this Chief of Scottish rhyme,
Let's sing Burns' song of 'Auld Lang Syne'!

By Brenda Williams

Dydd Santes Dwynwen Hapus



St. Dwynwen is the Welsh patron saint of lovers.

In the 4th century, Dwynwen was the prettiest of King Brychan Brycheiniog's daughters. She fell in love with a local lad called Maelon Dafodrill, but King Brychan had already arranged for her to marry another prince. Maelon took the news badly, so the distraught Dwynwen fled to the woods to weep, and begged God to help her.

She was visited by an angel who gave her a sweet potion to help her forget Maelon, which happened to turn him into a block of ice. God then granted Dwynwen three wishes. Her first wish was that Maelon be thawed; her second wish was for God to help all true lovers; her third wish was that she would never marry. In gratitude, Dwynwen became a nun and set up a convent on Llanddwyn Island, a beautiful little spot on Anglesey.

Her name means, 'she who leads a blessed life'. Nowadays, decoratively carved wooden spoons are often presented as a gift of romantic intent. The love spoon is normally decorated with various symbols of love and were traditionally intended to showcase the skills of the carver.





Start dates will be published here
and members notified directly
when we have information on re-opening dates
for these clubs in 2022:



DROP INS in Dereham and Cromer,
SATURDAY CLUBS in Dereham and Swaffham,
GATEWAY CLUB
& FAMILY CARERS

CARERS' LOCALITY MEETINGS

No face to face meetings are taking place at the present time; meetings are currently online. Contact Catherine Kennedy on 07932 095312 or email: info@carersvoice.org



These meetings are for carers and people working with carers to come together and share information about services and support for carers. They are an opportunity to identify what could be improved and co-develop solutions to gaps in support.

STEPPING OUT CLUB

Meetings take place at Church House, Church Street, Dereham
7.30pm — 9.00pm with a £1.50 entry fee.



Their meeting day is Thursdays and future planned dates so far for 2022 are:

Thursday 20th January
Thursdays 10th and 17th February
Thursdays 3rd and 31st March



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